

**Sabrina Hutchinson, Achievement First,
Appropriations Committee Hearing, March 1, 2011**

Good evening Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Sabrina Hutchinson and I am a proud parent of a 7th-grader at the Achievement First Hartford Academy. I wanted to share a little about my experience with the school and to ask for your support for my daughter Emjiah and her fellow students at Achievement First.

Emjiah has been with Achievement First since 5th grade and because of her experience she knows she will go to college. That's because Achievement First makes sure that students believe from the moment they enter those doors that they are expected to not only attend but to graduate from college.

Achievement First's commitment to education is just one of the reasons I love this school. I have seen amazing advances in my child's academic ability and she has progressed so much since she started there. So I have to wonder why if I chose to send my child to a school where she is doing so much better that she is funded at a lower amount. I feel as though we are being punished for choosing a great school.

I am happy that the Governor realizes that charter schools are a great choice and that she is committed to funding seats for charter schools. But she has also said that funding will not change for charter schools and that leaves us fighting for dollars again. In my opinion, charter schools are one of the best choices for Hartford students. Both Jumoke Academy and Achievement First have produced amazing results for children, and they should be funded the same as other public schools.

I believe in Achievement First because they believe in Emijah. I know the State is facing many challenges this year, but children should be the last thing we put at risk. If Connecticut made sure that every child was funded at the same level, no matter where they go to school, every school would perform better because funding would depend on it. It would support parental choice, which I believe is one of the best ways to support education reform.

I chose Achievement First and I am glad I did. I hope that every lawmaker will choose to put our children first and fund each of them at the same level. They deserve fairness as much as they deserve a great education.

Thank you.

